



## NEWS RELEASE

GREAT PLAINS REGIONAL OFFICE

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### DU & DEDICATED HUNTERS PROTECT SHORELAND ON FISH LAKE

BELGRADE, Minn, December 8, 2009 – In a world full of change, a group of dedicated hunters in southwest Stearns County have taken action to assure their shoreline property on Fish Lake stays the same for future generations. The Kauller Partnership, made up of Don Kauth, his two sons, Tom and Paul, and friends, Mark Miller and Charlie Mueller, recently agreed to a 183-acre conservation easement with Ducks Unlimited that permanently protects over 2,300 feet of shoreline on Fish Lake and 80 acres of soon-to-expire Conservation Reserve Program acres.

The project is supported by a 2009 grant to DU from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, and by a federal North American Wetland Conservation Act grant.

Don Kauth, a retired Minneapolis fireman, has hunted ducks on Fish Lake and neighboring lakes since 1949. When the opportunity arose to purchase the 183-acre property 10 years ago, Don and the group jumped at the chance.

“This land is all about wildlife conservation and making sure the kids and their kids have the opportunity to develop their own outdoor hunting traditions,” said Kauth. “Partnering with DU to protect this property and Fish Lake fits right in with those goals.”

Fish Lake is a 233-acre shallow lake with an average depth of four feet and good water clarity. The lake is an important resource to migratory and brood-rearing waterfowl because of the aquatic plants and invertebrates supported over most of its area. Waterfowl and other migratory birds depend on these aquatic plants and invertebrates for food and cover. A fish barrier installed on the Kauller Partnership property by DU and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in 2006 helps maintain the lake’s water quality and waterfowl habitat, but protection of the shoreline and adjacent lands is also a key objective for DU.

“Protecting shallow lake shoreline and adjacent lands from development and subdivision is a key component to maintaining quality waterfowl habitat into the future,” said Bob Usgaard, a regional biologist with DU. “This was a great project to complete under our Living Lakes Initiative because the easement protects over 175 acres of grass and wetland habitats covering the entire eastern side of Fish Lake.” Ducks Unlimited now holds 15 conservation easements that protect over 8 miles of shallow lake shoreline.

Once considered substandard for lake home development, shallow lakes are increasingly targeted today for new home construction and subdivisions. Shoreline development can degrade shallow lake water quality and aquatic vegetation and permanently remove wildlife habitat on adjacent uplands. By protecting their shoreline property, Don Kauth and other partnership members are doing what they can to see this doesn’t happen to Fish Lake.

“It’s important we protect places like Fish Lake if we want to make sure the next generation has the opportunity to experience the outdoor traditions I’ve enjoyed for so many years,” Kauth said.